

IN THE CLAIMS:

The text of all pending claims, (including withdrawn claims) is set forth below. Cancelled and not entered claims are indicated with claim number and status only. The claims as listed below show added text with underlining and deleted text with ~~strikethrough~~. The status of each claim is indicated with one of (original), (currently amended), (cancelled), (withdrawn), (new), (previously presented), or (not entered).

Please AMEND claims 1, 3, 5, 7 and 8 and CANCEL claim 4 in accordance with the following:

1. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An information collection and distribution system for collecting and distributing information between a server and a plurality of clients which are connected to a network,

wherein the server transmits communication blocks including at least addresses of the plurality of clients and pieces of distribution information ~~of the plurality of clients~~ to one client of the plurality of clients through said network;

said one client partitions all the other clients into a plurality of groups and relays the communication blocks to one client in each of the plurality of groups;

each-said one client out in each of said plurality of clients obtains the distribution information from the communication blocks, and circulates the communication blocks in which distribution results are set to a client next in the order on the basis of the destination addresses;

a final client of a last circulation destination which has received the pieces of distribution information last out in each of said plurality of clients-groups transmits the communication block to said one client that has partitioned the clients into groups; and

said one client that has partitioned the clients into groups merges the communication block from said final client of each circulation destination to form a merged communication block and relays the merged communication block transmitted from said final client to said server.

2. (ORIGINAL) The information collection and distribution system according to claim 1, wherein said server recognizes a client which fails in distribution on the basis of the distribution result set in the communication block transmitted from said one client, and re-transmits the communication block to said failed client.

3. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The information collection and distribution system

according to claim 1, wherein each client other than said one client and said final client transmits the communication block to said one client as intermediate notification when a next client as the circulation destination is in a stop state, and

 said one client relays the communication block transmitted from said client to said server.

4. (CANCELLED)

5. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An information collection and distribution system for collecting and distributing information between a server and a plurality of clients which are connected to a network,

 wherein said server transmits communication blocks including at least addresses of the plurality of clients to one client of the plurality of clients through the network;

 each client out of said plurality of clients sets the pieces of collection information in the communication blocks and circulates the communication blocks in which collection results are set to a client next in the order on the basis of the addresses;

 a final client which has received the pieces of distribution information last out of said plurality of clients transmits the communication block to said one client; and

 said one client merges the communication blocks from said plurality of clients to form a merged communication block and relays the merged communication block transmitted from said final client as one communication block to said server.

6. (ORIGINAL) The information collection and distribution system according to claim 5, wherein said server recognizes a client which fails in collection on the basis of the collection result set in the communication block transmitted from said one client, and re-transmits the communication block to said failed client.

7. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The information collection and distribution system according to claim 5, wherein each client other than said one client and said final client transmits the communication block to said one client as intermediate notification when a next client as the circulation destination is in a stop state, and

 said one client relays the communication block transmitted from said client to said server.

8. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The information collection and distribution system according to claim 5, wherein said one client partitions all the other clients into a plurality of groups and transmits a communication block to one client in each of the groups;

said one client in each of the groups obtains the distribution information from the communication block and circulates a communication block in which a distribution result is set to the next client in the group on the basis of an address;

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a final client of a circulation destination in each of the groups transmits the communication block to said one client that has partitioned the clients into groups; and

said one client that has partitioned the clients into groups relays-merges the communication block transmitted from said final client of each circulation destination to form a merged communication block and relays the merged communication block to said server.